



Litter Picks

Electronic Newsletter

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Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Environmental Enhancement

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DEQ's Community Involvement Initiative: The Department of Environmental Quality is dedicated to helping the public better understand DEQ's role in protecting the environment, and to involving the public more effectively in environmental decision making.

Welcome to Litter Picks, a look at litter prevention news in the Commonwealth and across the nation. We hope that some of this information is helpful to you in your programs, and hope you'll help us with news from your area related to litter prevention and awareness. Had a successful clean up event? Recognized companies or citizens for their clean up efforts? Let us know by sending this information to Sheila Barnett at smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov.

The Alice Ferguson Foundation is Honored

In 2007, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments recognized the Alice Ferguson Foundation (AFF) as a Partner of the Year for their trash-free efforts. AFF accepted the award in November, 2007.

Leadership Fairfax also recognized AFF in 2007 by awarding them the 2007 Northern Virginia Leadership Award for Community Partnerships. The Project Performance Corporation of Fairfax County sponsored AFF this year to recognize the AFF's work with the Trash Free Potomac Watershed Initiative.

The AFF coordinates the Annual Potomac River Watershed cleanup which included over 400 sites from March 31 to April 22, 2007. There were 8,000 volunteers that removed over 237 tons of trash from sites in Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Since 1989, there have been over 40,000 volunteers and 250 partners that have assisted in this regional litter cleanup.

For more information about the Alice Ferguson Foundation or the Trash Free Potomac, go to the following websites: www.fergusonfoundation.org or www.trashfreepotomac.org or contact Tracy Bowman, Executive Director of the Alice Ferguson Foundation at (301)292-5665 or tbowen@fergusonfoundation.org

Cleanup Correlates to What Students are Learning

Sixth grade students from Shelburne Middle School and students from Mary Baldwin College and the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind were among the group of volunteers that joined forces to participate in the Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee's Creek Cleanup day which was held on October 6, 2007. Kelly Scott, a teacher said that her class studies the watershed in the curriculum, so the pickup correlates to what they are learning.

The Lewis Creek Advisory Committee is an appointed board made up of representatives from **Augusta County** and the **City of Staunton**. To learn more about this group or the pickup, contact the Lewis Creek Advisory Committee at: info@lewiscreekwatershed.org

2007 Natural Resources Conservation Week

Virginia Celebrated Natural Resources Conservation Week the third week of October. National Resources Conservation Week is sponsored by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The theme for 2007 was litter. There were 184 programs that were reported as being part of the National Resources Conservation Week, with an estimated 42,844 participants. There were four media events, 143 school programs, 26 cleanup events, and 11 community education programs which included a special speaker event, landfill tours, secure your load campaigns, a recycling drive, festivals, and a rain barrel workshop. Litter Program Managers from the following counties reported litter/recycling programs related to the 2007 Natural Resources Conservation Week: **Augusta, Botetourt, Brunswick, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Clarke, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Lancaster, Lunenburg, Northumberland, Page, Prince William, Richmond, Russell, Roanoke, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, Tazewell, Warren, Washington and Westmoreland**. The following Cities also reported events: **Chesapeake, Roanoke, Salem and Virginia Beach**.

National Resource Conservation week was organized by Dana Roberts, Education Coordinator, Virginia Association for Soil and Water Conservation Districts; Clara Mills, 2007 President, Virginia Council for Litter Prevention and Recycling; and Nancy Drumheller, DEQ/Virginia Naturally.

For more information about Natural Resources Conservation Week and a list of litter and recycling activities, go to: <http://www.vaswcd.org/natresources.htm> or contact Dana Roberts at (804) 559-0324 or dana.roberts@vaswcd.org

Every Litter Bit Hurts

Sixth grade students from **Lancaster and Northumberland County** schools attended the Ground Water Festival at Camp Kekoka in Kilmarnock. Four volunteers, Sandy Henbest, John Henbest, Ginger Landry and Phil Landry presented a short skit called "Every Litter Bit Hurts." In the skit, the audience learns how long it takes some typical trash items to decompose and how animals and humans are hurt by litter. Students have an opportunity to take the litter pledge:

I promise to throw my trash away, and keep my space clean every day. I will respect the water and the land and protect it with my own two hands.

For more information about the skit, contact Sandy Henbest at (804) 580-4975.

Litter Picks Continued

Fall Cleanup Yields 11.25 Tons of Debris

The fall Smith River Clean up was organized by the **Gateway Streetscape Foundation** which is comprised of **Henry County** and the **City of Martinsville**. The cleanup was held the weekend of October 5 – 6, 2007. Ninety-two Volunteers cleaned up along roads the first day and waterways the second day. The volunteers also targeted illegal dumpsites.

The winter cleanup is scheduled for February 9, 2008.

For more information, Contact Lois Christensen, Gateway Streetscape Foundation, at gateway@co.henry.va.us or 276-634-4674

Falls Church Students Study the Health of a Stream

Floris Elementary School 6th grade students took a walking field trip along the Frying Pan Branch stream in **Herndon** to pick up litter. They plan to have additional litter patrols along the stream bank. In order to monitor the health of the stream, they plan on tracking the amount and type of litter that they find, and observe the clarity of the water, amount of sediment found on the rocks, and what types of invertebrates they find living in the water.

By cleaning and studying the area around the stream, the teachers hope that the students will become responsible citizens. For more information contact the principal, Karen Siple at (8703) 561-2900 or karen.siple@fcps.edu

News About Plastic Bags

The **Isle of Wight County** Board of Supervisors has adopted a resolution to ask the general assembly to give local governments the power to ban plastic bags in their jurisdictions.

In the county, plastic bags blow into the fields where cotton is growing. When the farmers harvest the cotton, the plastic bags get taken into the combine. When the plastic and cotton are sent to the gin, the plastic melts and leave specks all over the cloth.

Local grocery stores such as the **City of Richmond**-based Ukrops and Elwood Thompson's Local Market encourage shoppers to bring their own bags. On January 2, 2008, Ellwood Thompson will stop using plastic bags and will give 10-cent credits to customers who bring their own bags. Ukrops started selling a 99-cent reusable bag in September and it has sold 80,000 of the bags and given 162,470 five cent credits to customers who have used their own bags.

For more information about Isle of Wight County's resolution to be proposed to the General Assembly, contact Ralph Anderson, Jr., Assistant Director of Public Works at 757-365-1652 or randerson@isleofwightus.net.

To learn more about Ukrops' reusable bags contact 1-800-868-2270 or helpline@ukrops.com. For Ellwood Thompson: (804) 612-1024, ext. 13 or ljohnson@ellwoodthompsons.com

Clean Valley Council Hosts Successful Fall Waterways Cleanup

Ann Masters, Executive Director of the Clean Valley Council reported that 831 registered volunteers picked up 12,900 pounds of garbage (6.45 tons) during the fall cleanup that was held on October 6, 2007.

For more information, contact Ann Masters at: ann@cleanvalley.org or 540-345-5523

Volunteer Makes a Big Difference in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests

Bill Larkins is a retired volunteer who is dedicated to picking up litter and cleaning up illegal dump sites in Alleghany, Bath and Highland Counties. The U.S. Forest Service estimates that Mr. Larkins has cleaned up an estimated 36,000 pounds of trash from several dozen illegal dump sites. He purchased a powerful winch and a small trailer and uses specialized climbing equipment and ropes to get up and down steep slopes where he finds the most trash.

Scenic Virginia recognized Mr. Larkins at their awards ceremony that was held in Richmond on October 26, 2007. He received the Anti-Litter Award in the Individual Category.

Mr. Larkins has coordinated litter pickups with four-wheel drive enthusiasts who can access roads that he can't get to with his truck and trailer. These people help to clean up the forests on the weekends and bring the trash out of the woods to where Mr. Larkins can collect the trash and properly dispose of it.

During the weekend of December 15 – 16, 2007, more than 35 volunteers from the Charlottesville-based Northern Virginia Jeepers Association and 1-800 GOT-JUNK? collected 4 tons of trash in the forest from an illegal dump site off of U.S. 33 about 5 miles west of Harrisonburg in Rockingham County.

There have been 145 dumping incidents in the forest this past year which resulted in 11 written warnings where the culprit was identified and ordered to clean up the sites. Thirteen of the 145 cases which included the dumping of carcasses and industrial waste have resulted in formal prosecutions.

For more information contact Sharon Mohoney, Public Affairs Officer, George Washington & Jefferson National Forests at (540) 962-2214 or <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwi/newsroom/2007/11/local-man.shtml>

Litter in Chesterfield County is Decreasing

In the Chesterfield County Anti-Litter Program Newsletter, Pamela Cooper, Litter Program Manager for Chesterfield County, reports that she has more teams who are participating in the Adopt-a-Spot program and less litter! To date, she has 27 Adopt-a-Spot teams. In the fourth fiscal quarter of 2007, volunteers reported that they donated 296.5 hours towards litter pickup. Since 2004, volunteers have removed 37,300 pounds of litter from Chesterfield.

For more information, contact Pamela Cooper at (804) 751-2227 or: cooperp@chesterfield.gov

Be the Change! Share the Story!

Give students the opportunity to make a statement about their environment. Earth 911 and Quantum Shift TV are hosting a youth video contest. Students in 1st – 12th grade are invited to upload two videos. The first video outlines what the students want to do to improve their community and must be posted by January 31, 2008. The second video documents the progress that students have made and must be posted by March 31, 2008. Type in "litter" in the search box and watch a PSA example from Earth 911 about not littering in your neighborhood. Go to: <http://www.quantumshift.tv/>

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